

Highland School District #203

District Office

Monday, March 2, 2026

Regular AM Board Meeting -7:30 a.m.

The **March 2, 2026, AM Regular Board Meeting/Study Session** was convened by Chair Lupita Flores at 7:31 a.m. Those present also included board members Craig Chronister, Kerry Jones, and Carlos Lopez, Superintendent Mindy Schultz, Director of Business & Operations Francis Badu, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Board member Cindy Reed was absent. Lupita announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Director of State & Federal Programs Kirsten Lenz and MWC Principal Andrea Wickenhagen joined the meeting.

II. Business:

A. Dual Language Program Update: Kirsten and Andrea: To accommodate Spanish speaking only students, we used to have one kindergarten class that had predominantly mono-lingual students and the teacher taught in both Spanish and English. The state then said this wasn't allowed so the Spanish monolinguals had to be distributed between each of the classes. Recently the state changed their position and has adopted a similar dual language model. We are looking at a model called Heritage. It will be used in one TK class (4-5 year olds) where we hope to build home language skills and confidence as research shows that a child that builds proficient preacademic foundational skills (numbers, colors, shapes, counting) in their first/home language, they are more successful in transitioning to a new language in kinder and 1st grade. We have a population of TK students that are not strong in their home language, about 25, but only room for 15 to 20 so the students will be screened, looking at skill sets in either Spanish or English or both. We are looking at bi-lingual curriculum that would align with our current curriculum, but it needs to have true/traditional Spanish, not straight across translation. In the Heritage program students will have 90% of the day in Spanish and a 30-minute segment in English Language development, reading stories, acting them out, whole language, and literature in English. We are hoping we have an extra year to plan and feel that it is important to have three TK classrooms but state funding is unknown at the moment. Currently two of our TK teachers go back and forth between languages so students hear both, and one of those TK teachers has EL and Bilingual endorsements, the latter which will be required if ML funding is used due to lack of state funding. Early literacy has shown to have a positive impact on student success and Heritage could be a really successful program for our students and their families. Once funding is known, we will survey parents about the opportunity and give them information so they can understand the program and process.

Kirsten and Andi left the meeting at 7:47 a.m.

B. Communication Check-In: Nothing to report/share.

C. Winter Benchmark Data Results: Mindy: Shared charts that showed the data results from the testing/surveys done at the end of January. She explained SAEBRS, the social emotional screener survey taken by both students and teachers. Students that come in at 'some-risk' per their and their teachers' answers plus other risk factors such as poor attendance or failing classes are automatically put into an intervention. 'High-risk' students often are already flagged in for something, such as suspensions, an IEP, or a behavior plan. The schools looked at the scores, identified students that need a little extra support and made plans for assistance. Next Mindy explained the scores for ELA and Math and how we're looking at how to fill in the holes and gaps on our system. We discovered in math that the areas we focus on the kids do well, show gains, and the areas we don't focus on, they are decreasing. We score below the state average in HS Math (although the overall district score is higher) but we are high for our area and demographics, outperforming other schools with similar enrollment and demographics. [Per the scores] Math is the struggle for every district in the valley. At the high

school our ELA scores are incredible, our science scores are above the state average, math is the only one [below]. We have quite a few kids at level 2, which is what the state says is necessary to enter the work force. Level 3 is deemed college ready math. Next year our high school math department is changing the order of classes. The eighth-grade math skills they are learning better suits taking geometry as freshman, sophomores will take Algebra I, which more closely matches what the state tests cover that year, then juniors can take Algebra II. This better matches the progression of knowledge and the [state] math standards. We need to really work on our overall instruction in math so we continue to work with a specialist from the ESD and we'll be looking at what we want math to look like at Highland. One option is '9th grade math' and '10th grade math', covering what students needs to know at those grade levels vs specifically Geometry, Algebra I etc. We have a math curriculum adoption coming up so before we adopt a curriculum, we need to know what we're looking for and what we need to do to improve our math instruction.

D. 2026-2027 HSD Instructional Calendar Review: Mindy: The HEA calendar group is scheduled to meet with the principals three times and hope to have a calendar option to present to the board at the March PM meeting on the 17th.

E. 2nd Reading Policy 3420 Anaphylaxis Prevention & Response: There were no questions about the policy. Moved to 3rd Reading/Consent Agenda.

F. Enrollment Projection Update: Mindy and Francis: We are looking at enrollment in consideration of next year's budget. Without counting any withdrawals (typically five to ten students), we will have 30 fewer headcount (HC) assuming we have 50 kindergartners. This equates to about 914 HC and 900 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent/Enrolled) next year. Most of our withdrawing students [that live in district] are choosing to go to a different school/district. The average for home-schooled students stays pretty consistent. FTE drives our core funding. Our enrollment over the past 12-13 years has dropped 249 FTEs. The state allocation for each student is a little over \$10,000, so this is a loss of \$2.5M. Over the years we have had and will continue to have to make adjustments, staffing to match enrollment for instance. We look at our funding structure, at the details and how the state is funding us, how many FTEs they allocate for facilities, teachers, paras, etc. and try to make changes as the funding goes down. There is a loss of funding for the students that do Running Start or YV Tech as that is shared between HSD and YVC. We get funding from some federal sources, Migrant, Multilingual, and LAP for instance but those don't cover any general or basic ed costs.

III. Closing Items

There were no final questions nor comments.

The March 2, 2026, AM meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Chair

Secretary